

**What is claimed is:**

1. An aerosolization device comprising:  
5 a housing;  
a container comprising a reservoir storing a pharmaceutical formulation  
which comprises a propellant;  
a metering valve in communication with the reservoir, the metering valve  
being moveable into the container to an actuated position, wherein a predetermined amount of the  
10 pharmaceutical formulation is released when the metering valve is moved to the actuated position;  
and  
a contact member in the housing, the contact member being moveable  
between a first position and a second position, wherein a portion of the metering valve is able to  
contact the contact member when in the first position and is unable to contact the contact member  
15 when in the second position.
2. An aerosolization device according to claim 1 wherein the metering valve  
may be moved to the actuated position only when the contact member is in the first position.
- 20 3. An aerosolization device according to claim 1 wherein the container and the  
metering valve are moveable within the housing and wherein when the contact member is in the  
first position, the metering valve is able to contact the contact member so that it may be moved into  
the container to the actuated position and when the contact member is in the second position, the  
metering valve is unable to contact the contact member and cannot be moved into the container to  
25 the actuated position.
4. An aerosolization device according to claim 1 further comprising a controller  
adapted to selectively control the movement of the contact member.
- 30 5. An aerosolization device comprising:  
a housing;

a container comprising a reservoir storing a pharmaceutical formulation which comprises a propellant;

a metering valve in communication with the reservoir, the metering valve being moveable into the container to an actuated position, wherein a predetermined amount of the pharmaceutical formulation is released when the metering valve is moved to the actuated position; and

a contact member in the housing, the contact member having a first configuration and a second configuration, wherein a portion of the metering valve is able to contact the contact member when in the first configuration in a manner which allows the metering valve to be moved to the actuated position.

6. An aerosolization device according to claim 5 wherein the metering valve may be moved to the actuated position only when the contact member is in the first configuration.

7. An aerosolization device according to claim 5 wherein the container and the metering valve are moveable within the housing and wherein when the contact member is in the first configuration, the metering valve is able to contact the contact member so that it may be moved into the container to the actuated position and when the contact member is in the second position, the metering valve is able to contact the contact member but cannot be moved into the container to the actuated position.

8. An aerosolization device according to claim 5 wherein the contact member is rigid in the first configuration and is flexible in the second configuration.

9. An aerosolization device according to claim 5 further comprising a controller adapted to selectively control the configuration of the contact member.

10. An aerosolization device comprising:  
a housing;  
a container comprising a reservoir storing a pharmaceutical formulation which comprises a propellant;

a metering valve in communication with the reservoir, the metering valve being moveable into the container to an actuated position, wherein a predetermined amount of the pharmaceutical formulation is released when the metering valve is moved to the actuated position; and

5 a contact member in the housing, the contact member being moveable from a first condition to a second condition, wherein when the contact member is in the first condition, the metering valve may contact the contact member so as to allow the metering valve to be moved to the actuated position.

10 11. An aerosolization device according to claim 10 wherein the first condition is a first position and wherein the second condition is a second position.

12. An aerosolization device according to claim 11 wherein first position is a position in the housing where the contact member may contact a portion of the metering valve.

15 13. An aerosolization device according to claim 10 wherein the first condition is a first configuration and wherein the second condition is a second configuration.

20 14. An aerosolization device according to claim 13 wherein the first configuration is a rigid configuration and the second configuration is a relatively flexible configuration.

25 15. An aerosolization device according to claim 10 wherein the metering valve may be moved to the actuated position only when the contact member is in the first condition.

30 16. An aerosolization device according to claim 10 wherein the container and the metering valve are moveable within the housing and wherein when the contact member is in the first condition, the metering valve is able to contact the contact member so that it may be moved into the container to the actuated position and when the contact member is in the second condition, the metering valve cannot be moved into the container to the actuated position.

17. An aerosolization device according to claim 10 further comprising a controller adapted to selectively control the condition of the contact member.

5 18. An aerosolization device comprising:  
a housing;  
a container comprising a reservoir storing a pharmaceutical formulation which comprises a propellant;  
a metering valve in communication with the reservoir, the metering valve being moveable into the container to an actuated position, wherein a predetermined amount of the  
10 pharmaceutical formulation is released when the metering valve is moved to the actuated position;  
and  
a contact member in the housing,  
wherein the metering valve may be moved to the actuated position when the metering valve and/or the container is able to contact the contact member and may not be actuated  
15 with the metering valve and/or the container is unable to contact the contact member.

19. An aerosolization device according to claim 17 further comprising a controller adapted to selectively control when the metering valve may and may not be moved to the actuated position.

20 20. An aerosolization device comprising:  
a housing;  
a container comprising a reservoir storing a pharmaceutical formulation which comprises a propellant;  
25 a metering valve in communication with the reservoir, the metering valve being moveable into the container to an actuated position, wherein a predetermined amount of the pharmaceutical formulation is released when the metering valve is moved to the actuated position;  
and  
a contact member in the housing,  
30 wherein the metering valve may be moved to the actuated position when the metering valve and/or the container is able to contact the contact member in a rigid configuration

and may not be actuated with the metering valve and/or the container is unable to contact the contact member in a rigid configuration.

21. An aerosolization device according to claim 20 further comprising a controller adapted to selectively control when the metering valve may and may not be moved to the actuated position.

22. A method of controlling the operation of an aerosolization device, the aerosolization device comprising a container comprising a reservoir storing a pharmaceutical formulation which comprises a propellant, and the aerosolization device comprising a metering valve in communication with the reservoir, the metering valve being moveable into the container to an actuated position, wherein a predetermined amount of the pharmaceutical formulation is released when the metering valve is moved to the actuated position, the method comprising:

positioning a contact member in a first position where the contact member may contact the metering valve and/or the container to allow the metering valve to be moved to the actuated position; and

positioning the contact member in a second position where the metering valve may not be moved to the actuated position.

23. A method according to claim 22 wherein the second position is a position where the contact member may not be contacted by the metering valve or the container.

24. A method according to claim 22 comprising returning the contact member to the first position after a condition is met.

25. A method according to claim 24 wherein the condition is the passage of a predetermined amount of time.

26. A method of controlling the operation of an aerosolization device, the aerosolization device comprising a container comprising a reservoir storing a pharmaceutical formulation which comprises a propellant, and the aerosolization device comprising a metering

valve in communication with the reservoir, the metering valve being moveable into the container to an actuated position, wherein a predetermined amount of the pharmaceutical formulation is released when the metering valve is moved to the actuated position, the method comprising:

5                    configuring a contact member in a first configuration wherein the contact member may contact the metering valve and/or the container to allow the metering valve to be moved to the actuated position; and

                  configuring the contact member in a second configuration wherein the metering valve may not be moved to the actuated position.

10                    27.     A method according to claim 26 wherein the first configuration is a rigid configuration.

                  28.     A method according to claim 26 wherein the second configuration is a flexible configuration.

15                    29.     A method according to claim 26 comprising returning the contact member to the first configuration after a condition is met.

20                    30.     A method according to claim 29 wherein the condition is the passage of a predetermined amount of time.